

To: Judge Talwani

From: Jorge Salcedo

Re: Acceptance of responsibility

Dear Judge, Talwani:

For several months, I have prayed, contemplated, and critically thought through the words to express in this letter. One phrase that I often shared with my student-athletes at UCLA continues to surface: a man's true character is revealed when "no one is watching you". Through the lens of this measurement, I must admit that I failed to portray a man of good and upstanding character. I take complete responsibility for my actions. There were a series of poor and nefarious choices. I blame only myself. Since my arrest on March 12, 2019, there has not been one day that I do not lament my actions. Being the Head Coach of the UCLA Men's Soccer team was an incredible honor and privilege. I was the steward of elite young men who had an insatiable desire to succeed in all aspects of their lives. There was a season of my life as the head coach that I became unaware of my ultimate responsibility, which was to embody and model a leader who lives by the rules and is honest every day of your life. The primary goal of this letter is to accept full responsibility for my actions. Secondly, my hope is that you will perceive a snapshot of my life. The period that I wrongly participated in facilitating admissions was a convergence of many years of my life prior to being at UCLA and while there. In fact, the indictment in March 2019 may have saved my life, my marriage, and my family. It prevented me from doing any further damage or something that may have been impossible to recover from.

Childhood

Both of my parents were born in Mexico. They came to the United States as teenagers with little money, which made it challenging because they had large families. Prior to leaving Mexico for the US, my mother witnessed some horrific events, the likes of which no young girl should ever experience. Even at her current age of 76, she suffers from trauma she experienced in Mexico. The generational issues that plagued my parents had a deep impact on my brother and me. We were a family, like many around the world, that did not know how to cope or deal with significant childhood moments. There were critical times that could have been lifelong lessons that would have shaped a different way forward.

My childhood was defined by a supreme dedication to academics and athletics. I was driven to become an elite soccer player. My everyday was consumed by becoming the best leader, teammate, and player I could be. By the age of fifteen I was traveling around the world to play soccer. I missed long periods of school to represent the United States with the u-17 and u-20 National Team.

As a young boy, I was blessed to experience all that I had worked extremely hard to achieve. Soccer became my life and gave me a purpose and motivation each and every day.

My background at UCLA

My father was an assistant coach at UCLA in 1978. In 1985, I became a ball boy for the team and was around them as often as possible. At the age of twelve, I was exposed to the best collection of young men in the country. UCLA soccer was regarded as one of the top three programs in the United States. The rosters were filled with the best players from California. Every young boy that played soccer on the West Coast dreamed of being on the UCLA soccer team. It was the standard of excellence. To be a member of the team was one of the greatest accomplishments and feats that can be bestowed on a young man. In 1990, I was a freshman on the soccer team and experienced firsthand what I had seen from the outside. It was even better than I ever imagined. I was surrounded by the most elite players who innately demanded that I was at my best every day. Not performing was not an option, each player found a way to pull their end of the bargain. I did everything I could to succeed and perform to the utmost of my abilities. My four years at UCLA shaped the following thirty years of my life professionally.

Ten years after stepping onto the UCLA campus as a freshman, I returned as a coach. I had never coached before in my life and was now hired as the assistant coach. To this day, it was one of the most enjoyable professional experiences I have ever had. I did not have the pressure of the head coach, nor the numerous responsibilities. I was just a coach attempting to positively affect our players by giving them sound advice and guidance.

After four years as the assistant, the head coach decided to leave for another job. Being the head coach was considered one of the premier soccer jobs in the country. Every soccer coach, regardless if they were professional or collegiate, would consider it an honor to be the coach of the UCLA men's soccer team. As you can imagine, there were numerous candidates. Of the ten finalists, I was the only one that did not have head coaching experience. I knew in my heart that I could do the job and I prepared for the opportunity to the best of my ability. The day I was offered the job is one of the most indelible moments of my life. I shared the news with my fiancée Rebecca, by saying "we got the job". Together, Rebecca and I would embark on an experience that gave us pure joy. The boys on the team became like children to us, and we embraced them as if they were our sons.

At UCLA you are defined by winning. Not winning conference championships, but National Championships. Each year is considered a failure if you do not reach the Final Four, which is the apex of collegiate sports. For the first twelve seasons of my head coaching career, my wife and I were on a year-to-year contract. There was enormous pressure to win, my performance was based on my seasonal record. Three years into my tenure, we were in the National Championship game. At age 35, I reached the pinnacle of our sport. Unfortunately, we lost in the final, it would have been UCLA Athletics 100th National Championship, the first athletic department to achieve this incredible feat.

The achievement was a tremendous platform to further build a successful career. The following season, one year removed from the National Championship, we experienced what would become the worst season of my first ten seasons at UCLA. 2008 was another challenging year. Two poor seasons by our standards and we were headed into the 2009 season with an ultimatum from my boss. If we did not have a phenomenally successful season, I would be relieved of my duties and be terminated. I asked him to define what a successful season looked like, and it was to get to the Elite 8. There are 204 men's programs, and I was told to keep my job, we had to finish in the top eight. Only three seasons removed from the National Championship, I was now confronted with an immense amount of pressure.

To perform under these circumstances is what I prepared for from the age of fourteen. When faced with adversity, I knew I had to deliver our best. In 2009 under extreme pressure to succeed, our team did just that. We were one of the last eight teams in the country. This feeling and emotion of putting everything you have into a team daily, within a sport that I genuinely love, is what I have missed every day since leaving UCLA. Competition is what drove me as an athlete and as a coach. Going through these challenges with student-athletes was an incredibly unique experience. I cannot envision participating in a more gratifying environment because it was born from an authentic place. The only motivation was to succeed as a group. This was done out of a love for a sport that drove everyone in our program. I have potentially lost this opportunity for the rest of my professional career.

Once again, your Honor, there is no one to blame other than myself. I was not strong enough to stand up to my responsibility. I failed to uphold the standard of character that was required to lead the UCLA men's soccer team. This failure will be one that I carry with me for the rest of my career as a soccer coach, but it will also shape and guide how I move forward as a person.

My family

Of utmost importance in my life are my faith and my family. I have been blessed to be married to my wife since 2004. Rebecca and I have four children, ages 15, 13, 10 and 6. There were times throughout this ordeal that the trauma and pain, which I created for my family, was almost unbearable for all of us. We were forced to move out of our home in Los Angeles. In the blink of an eye, my actions destroyed all the communities my children had come to love. Their church, school, sports, and circle of friends were taken away from them. The day that my wife and I had to sit with each one of them separately to share that we needed to move, was one of the most painful moments in my life. To see their faces filled with extreme sadness and bewilderment was exceedingly difficult to witness.

We moved to Folsom, California. During this period, we were around people who would help us get through this season of life. As a family we learned how to live in a different city. My wife managed in the most graceful and loving way, through all the trials and tribulation. Our children have persevered and thrived in a way that will be a part of their story that defines their lives.

Since my arrest, I have had to find a new rhythm to my daily life. From the outset of the move to Northern California to our most recent move back to Southern California, I have been proactive in doing all I can to support my family. My contribution to the way our household functions has been a priority of mine. Currently our four children and my wife attend and work at the same school. My daily routine begins at 5:00 am. I wake up to pray, read, and begin the preparation for the kids. The goal is to feed them breakfast, make their lunches and pray as a family before they leave at 7:15 am. Once they leave for school, I begin my workday because of the various time zones I work with. From Asia, to Mexico, my days are filled with the task of building an international business. Concurrently throughout the day, I will do household chores that will minimize any work that needs to be done when my family returns from a long day at work and school. Coupled with school, are the weekly commitments to sports and activities. I drive my children to soccer practice and a game or two, four to six days a week. I consider it a pure pleasure to spend this time with them in the car or having dinner and just talking. For work, I am constantly on the phone, but this time with my children is dedicated to giving them undivided attention. They see my daily commitment to their lives. They constantly hear that I am proud of them and love them. My children mean the world to me and they see my dedication to be a good father to them.

My wife Rebecca and I met at a UCLA soccer game in 1999. The first day I met her, I asked her to marry me. At that time, it was just a statement to grab her attention. I never understood until recently what it meant to be married. My life was built on what "I" did to get results or achieve success. My selfishness and unwillingness to share what we were confronted with began a ten-year unraveling of our marriage. Without an unyielding pursuit of her faith, our marriage would have been doomed. My inability to understand that a marriage is built on trust, placed the relationship I care about the most on the precipice of disaster. By no means is our marriage perfect now, but we are on a path to redemption, forgiveness, and a new way forward. Our children see their parents attempting to model a relationship that is built on substance and awareness of what is meaningful.

In March 2019, I could not understand how my seemingly sole desire to provide for my family was now destroying everything. By March 2021, I knew and understood that there is a right way to do things and a wrong way. My misguided thinking came from a place that I thought was for good intentions. I wanted to provide a life that I conjured up through what I thought was a lifestyle my family desired. I was constantly thinking we did not have enough, when in fact we had everything we needed. I had one of the best soccer jobs in America, most importantly a loving and supportive wife and four incredible children. Fortunately, I have learned from my mistakes and will *never* walk in dishonesty again.

Current employment

I have been hired by a group from the state of Washington who have invented technologies that will have a meaningful effect on important industries. Due to the current worldwide pandemic, there is a significant need for alternative solutions to manage viruses. My role as the president and head of business development is to introduce our products to the world. The current focus is on Mexico, Africa, Middle East and Asia.

One of the inventors and stakeholders of our company is a leading infectious disease expert. His sole desire is to see our technologies introduced into markets around the world to improve the quality of people's lives. Our HOCL will provide an alternative cost-effective solution for respiratory ailments. We have made significant headway in Mexico and soon we will be ready to support Africa. From COVID, MERS, SARS, Ebola, Dengue Fever to many other ailments, we can help underserved communities.

We will positively affect the horticultural industry. Our SIO2 technology has been proven to enhance the production of thirty-three different types of species of plants. We are in the process of finalizing our agreement to own world-wide rights, which will allow us to increase food production in numerous countries. Recently we have been in discussions with key figures from the cotton industry. Our SIO2 has proven a 15% increase in the production of cotton.

Another example of the effect we will have on the quality of people's lives is in Sudan. One of the main products the Sudanese people produce is peanuts. Unfortunately, the peanut industry has been severely affected by a bacterium in the harvest. This bacterium has sadly led to numerous cases of liver cancer. We have a product that will kill the bacterium in the peanuts and prevent the Sudanese people from this terrible issue they are currently facing.

With humility I share that I have played an integral role in creating the platform to enter several international markets. Many of our core technologies were developed over the last twenty years with the assistance and guidance of a leading United States university. My contributions will create a pathway to introduce the life body of work of accomplished scientists. These products will positively affect numerous industries, especially in healthcare and horticulture.

Conclusion

Unwinding forty-six years of my life has been a painstaking process. I have learned and identified how to move forward in a manner that is going to make me a better man, husband, and father. I made poor choices and take full responsibility for my actions. I am extremely sorry for the harm I have caused to everyone that was affected by what I did.


As stated at the beginning of this letter, my goal was to acknowledge and accept responsibility for my actions. My secondary goal was to share a glimpse of my life. Since the fall of 2019, I have surrounded myself on a daily basis with a spiritual and life coach. He has held me accountable everyday for all my actions. He knows that I have a good heart but was led astray and made poor choices.

Of the many opinions and purposes for incarceration, deterrence and rehabilitation are two of the top reasons. I understand that there will be a punishment for my actions. As for deterrence in my life moving forward, I have deeply hurt the people I love most. I will never walk the proverbial fine line between right and wrong. When it comes to the law, it is black and white. When it comes to integrity and morality, there is no option but the truth. I know I can now be a man of honest and upright character, a man my wife and children can be proud of. The pain alone I caused my wife and children is a deterrent that I am reminded of often. We lost the life we all loved because of me. Not a day goes by that I do not deeply regret my actions.

A litmus of the rehabilitation that has taken place is the people that have chosen to participate as a meaningful part of my life. The founders of my company are seventy-four and seventy-eight years old respectively. Their life body of work has produced innovative and leading technologies. They have entrusted me to establish, form, and build our company in numerous international markets. This undertaking is extremely challenging, but a task that I know I can fulfill. I have dealt with my case head on, full well knowing that every person I encounter has the prerogative not to work with me. This has not been an issue, because they hear and see my contrition and willingness to move forward in the right direction.

My life coach often shares the following phrase: "the first fifty years of life are warm up". I am ready to move on with my life. I am ready to put this horrific chapter behind us. More importantly, I have moved forward in an upstanding and honorable way. I am willing and ready to face the final consequences of my actions, and I humbly plead for your merciful decision.

Respectfully submitted with gratitude,


Jorge Salcedo